

DICKS' STANDARD PLAYS.

THE PAINTER OF GHENT,
AND
102; OR, THE VETERAN AND HIS PROGENY

Written Respectively by Douglas Jerrold and H. M. Milner.



ORIGINAL COMPLETE EDITIONS.—PRICE ONE PENNY.

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AND

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LADY OR GENTLEMAN.

HOW TO OBTAIN AN ENGAGE-
MENT.

Extract from the Preface of the Work :—“ There are certain difficulties that are inseparable from the earliest phases of the dramatic art. There are others that arise chiefly, if not solely, from the want of practical information, arranged in proper order, and conveyed with due simplicity and clearness of definition. Such difficulties necessarily result in a greater or less degree of disappointment to those who are candidates for dramatic honours ; and not unfrequently lead to the abandonment, almost without actual trial, of the profession of the stage by those who might, if properly directed, have come to be reckoned among its chief ornaments.

“ It the purpose of the following pages to remove, where possible, and in all cases to lessen just such difficulties, by furnishing a ready reference to information which shall smooth the way for the more resolute, and, at the same time, encourage the desponding to persevere.

London: JOHN DICKS, 313, Strand ; W. CLARKSON, Theatrical Wig Maker, 45, Wellington Street Strand ; and all Newsagents,



00747200

BY DOUGLAS JERROLD.

This Play was represented for the first time at the Strand Theatre, April 25th, 1830.



[See page 8.

	[See page 8.]
RODERICK	Mr. D. Jerrold.
ICHABOD	Mr. Mitchell.
FATHER FRANCIS	Mr. Moss.
ANSON	Mr. Ranson.
SERVANT	Mr. Cooke.
EUPHEMIA	Miss Beresford.
CHILD	Miss C. Booth.

SCENE.—Ghent.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—Forty-five Minutes.

No. 651. Dicks' Standard Plays.

COSTUME.

The Costumes are of the period of the latter part of the Fifteenth Century.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; D. F. *Door in Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*; L. U. E. *Left Upper Entrance*; R. U. E. *Right Upper Entrance*; L. S. E. *Left Second Entrance*; P. S. *Prompt Side*; O. P. *Opposite Prompt*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; RC., *Right of Centre*; L.C. *Left of Centre*.

R.	RC.	C.	LC.	L.
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* * * The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

THE PAINTER OF GHENT.

SCENE.—An Apartment, massively furnished, in the Gothic style. On the walls the portrait of a female, with three portraits of children. On one side a richly-carved and ornamented cabinet.

Discovered, RODERICK seated, intently gazing on the picture of a child, before him. ICHABOD and ANSON waiting apart.

Ich. (To Anson.) I may not tarry longer.

Ans. A little—yet a little.

Ich. I say, I have affairs that call me. (Approaching Roderick.) Good sir—

Ans. Hush! thou dost not know the peril. (Aside—watching Roderick.) Oh, I fear him! Would he had never seen it!

Ich. (To Roderick.) Good, noble gentleman—

Ans. Peace! See you not his face?

Ich. In brightest day, sir, I could hardly see the grave my staff might touch. His face!

Ans. (Aside—observing Roderick.) So it looked when—oh, that smile! Alas, I fear him!

Ich. But I can count the hours—half-hours—minutes; at seventy-five 'tis time to count them. And, again, sir, I may no longer stay.

Ans. Wait. (Approaching Roderick.) Old Ichabod, the Jew—the picture trader.

Rod. Right—very right.

Ans. He would sell the picture, and be gone.

Rod. (Turning to him.) Ichabod—fie, Anson! a chair.

(Anson places a chair, and Ichabod sits near Roderick. Anson stands apart.)

Ich. It is the picture, sir—is't not?

Rod. It is.

Ich. A noble thing, sir—a wondrous thing! I have not eyes to see it now—but it is here, sir, here—a piece of very light.

Rod. You knew the painter?

Ich. I was his first patron. He would have perished—starved with his wife and children, but that I spared him something, something for—

Rod. The noble things—the wondrous things he wrought!

Ich. He had made an unthrifty match with a poor, pretty face, and his rich father—so I gathered—thrust him penniless abroad.

Rod. And then, it seems, he turned accomplishment to bread—to daily food for wife and babes? You were a patron—he became a drudge.

Ich. By Aaron's beard, I swear I was his friend—his first friend; took all he did, sir, good and bad. Aye, risked my sure gold upon a nameless hand.

Rod. And found he no other help? Were you alone in this good work?

Ich. In time, other dealers flocked about him—would have bought him from me; but then, sir, I raised and raised my price, and he was faithful to an early friend. That picture—'twas I think the last he sold me,—it was the last—the price I paid confirms it: aye, fifty golden pieces.

Rod. Thy memory is worn—think again—not fifty?

Ich. Sure I am 'twas fifty—sure, as if now I chinked the pieces in my hand.

Rod. How old art thou, Ichabod?

Ich. Seventy-five, a month, and odd three days.

Rod. And every day narrows the little, little space between thee and the grave—and every night thou layest thy dry bones in thy bed, thou well mayest fear that ere the next sunset, a churchyard clay shall hold them! Thy beard is white—thy limbs unstrung—thy blood jellied—and thine eyeballs quenched. Old man, death is aiming at thee.

Ich. Amen! I await the stroke.

Rod. What! with a lie upon thy lip?

Ich. Master!

Rod. A trading lie, when worms are waiting thee? Ichabod, believe it—an old man's face, though seamed and stained with years, should beam with coming glory!

Ich. What now, sir?—what need of talk like this? Abraham receive me!—I—we spake of the picture, and—

Rod. And I said thy memory wandered. Five—not fifty pieces—was the price you paid. Nay, I knew the painter.

Ich. Knew Roderick?

Rod. Knew his history—know his every work.

Ich. Is he alive?

Rod. Aye.

Ich. I can make him rich. ~~You know his pictures? there was one—a baby Hercules, grasping a wolf—~~

Rod. ~~He painted it within the shadow of a gaol.~~

Ich. 'Twas but last week its now inheritor—a wealthy friend of art—came to my house to seek the painter out. He would employ him on—

Rod. What!

Ans. (Aside to Ichabod.) Peace! For God's great love, be silent!

Rod. (Solmnly.) The time is past—he cannot work for man!

Ans. (Aside.) Out on the Jew! the fit returns.

Ich. Noble sir, you said he was alive. I speak of—

Ans. (Interposing.) The picture you would sell his honour. (To Roderick.) Ichabod would fix the bargain, and depart. Now, Jew—now.

Ich. Well, sir, well—perhaps my memory was false; I could have sworn 'twas fifty, but if you know the painter—

Rod. Hear, then judge. 'Tis eighteen years since Roderick for the first time lingered at your door. Pictures of excelling power—wonders of the art were there, tempting the rudest passenger to pause, and feed upon their beauty. And Roderick stood and gazed, but not on them. A child, whose eye, and cheek, and waving hair, and fawn-like grace, and happy, glorious looks made dim the painted life about it—a child—

Ich. 'Twas Reuben!—I could not speak before—'twas my own bright boy—the child of my grey hairs—the dove, sent as I thought, to murmur peace to my old age!

Rod. The infant, loudly laughing, ran towards Roderick; he had taken it in his arms—

Ichabod. When I appeared. 'Tis all before me now. He praised my boy; (who did not, who had the eyes and ears of man?) he praised him—talked of the art—and next day showed me a picture of his own. I bought it—bade him bring me more; that before you—the figure is his own child—was the last. Oh, Reuben! Reuben! I recollect—'twas five pieces.

Rod. With drowning eyes, and burning hand—for death again was at my hearth—I laboured at my half-completed work.

Ichabod. Thou!

Rod. I tell you, for one whole day I wrestled with my heart; and that picture—the semblance of my last living babe—I sold to buy a coffin for the dead.

Ichabod. And thou did'st not tell me this?

Rod. Thou did'st know my wretchedness.

Ichabod. But had'st thou told—

Rod. Told! When swelling affluence doth blink its horny eyes, think you the pride of poverty can find a tongue? I laid my little one in yonder earth, and turned my back upon your city.

Ichabod. And I was then a father! And still I chattered—still, with the hardness of old Egypt, tasked you for scanty bread. Well, I have been—am scourged for it. Reuben!—my murdered Reuben!

Rod. Murdered!

Ichabod. Oh, sir! he grew like a young palm, and my heart waxed great within me, and I felt not age when I did look upon him. He was a healing jewel to mine eye—a staff of cedar in my hand—a fountain at my foot.

Rod. And slain?

Ichabod. In the street. Thrice a day I kneel upon the place, and what I pray there may not be told to man!

Rod. Killed!

Ichabod. It was a day of state—the streets were thronged. A neighbour's child, one of our people—a gentle, timid girl, went with my son. He pressed to place her near the sight, when a young noble smote him to the earth. My boy leapt up—I thank God!—returned the blow. The ruffian drew upon my child—cried “dog of a Jew!”—and pierced his guileless heart.

Rod. Old man—old man!

Ichabod. The sword is here while I do speak of it.

Rod. The murderer?

Ichabod. The murderer? He was noble. He paid some fine they say—had leave to travel. Reuben was a Jew.

Rod. Almighty heaven!

Ichabod. Had one of our tribe trod on a noble's hound—plucked a feather from a noble's hawk, he had been striped, and prisoned, mutilated, marred. The meek, professing Christian, breaks God's own precept, and journeys forth in peace.

Rod. Not in peace—not in peace.

Ichabod. They brought my boy to my dark house. I saw the wound—I have seen nothing clearly since.

Rod. Sweet boy!

Ichabod. Ha, thou dost remember him?

Rod. Did I not paint—

Ichabod. That picture! In an evil hour, won by his prayers, I gave it to his grandfather. When Reuben was lost to me, I travelled far to repurchase it. I found it—the house and all it held had passed to alien hands—I found it, flung with

lumber in a reeking vault. Vermin—pitiless as men—had preyed upon it: the face—that lovely face—was half destroyed; even his sweet image was denied me! But thou art sent to aid—wilt hear me?

Rod. Speak?

Ichabod. Think it the prayer of an old, weak, blind, childish man—think it, but do not refuse it. His face! thou'lt say, I cannot see it. True, but I shall know 'tis there—can lay my hand upon it. Reuben's face—thou knowest it—oh, it is still within my brain, before thine eyes—thou couldst not, if thou wouldst, forget it! Wilt thou—wilt thou restore it?

Rod. No!

Ans. (*Aside to Ichabod.*) Peace! thou'lt bring back madness.

Rod. (*Solemnly.*) Ask it no more—this hand is not mine own. It is a thing, rescued from earthly purposes—a thing, by holy use, made sacred unto heaven! Harken—I will tell thee.

Ans. Him! an unbeliever?

Rod. When the earth shone in its new brightness—when this still beautiful earth,—one wide altar, bore its odorous first-fruits to the sky—when yellow time had mild angelic looks—and human hearts were soft, and man smiled greetingly to man,—came there not from the far world mighty things, whose might was beauty?

Ichabod. Aye, sir—aye.

Rod. For then were men as younger brothers of the angels, and won their high communion. Jew, thou dost believe this?

Ichabod. Aye—upon my soul.

Rod. The world changed with its dwellers. Time grew haggard—man lived earthwards. Yet came there highest spirits—in mercy did they come—to strengthen and to warn. It is thy faith?

Ichabod. My faith.

Rod. The world we dwell in—what have man's low passions made it? What hath his pride, lust, folly, crime, built up?—a gaol, with walls as high as Babel! and here we pine, the oppressing and the oppressed; and here, some trace a shadowy pageant on the floor—some scratch a name within the flint—some, witless, laugh a hollow life away—some, silent die—and some go raving mad!

Ans. (*Aside.*) Alas!

Rod. Speak! Is't not so?

Ans. (*Aside to Ichabod.*) Thou hast stirred up this—do not cross him.

Ichabod. It is.

Rod. And yet, in this cold, clouded time, self-captives as we are—still toiling to make fast our prison—we cannot bar good out. I say, where not a mote can enter, angels come to man!

Ichabod. Good sir,—

Rod. If moved by mortal agony—if touched by human tears. They come,—looking felicity—speaking manna!

Ichabod. Aye—aye.

Rod. Then harken—for thy faith hath won my story. Harken; and while I speak, forget the earth; think all things worldly, passing from thee—thyself on the eternal waters laving the bright future. Harken!

Ans. Master! the father—heaven be thanked!—the Father Francis! He comes—you will remember—as you bade him. (*Aside, hurrying Ichabod.*) Come, Jew—follow me.

Rod. I had forgotten—it is the day. I had forgotten.

Ans. Thy hand, Ichabod,—

[Exit L H

Enter FATHER FRANCIS, R. H.

Fran. Peace be with ye? Where is thy master?

Ans. Within. Oh, father! thou art come in happy time to soothe him.

Fran. So ill?

Ans. The Jew hath torn the wound afresh; again he raves.

Fran. Seek him—urge, that I attend. A word with the Jew. [*Exit Anson.*] What has thou uttered to this soul-sick man—what, thy business here?

Ich. Lawful traffic—honest dealing.

Fran. Thou wouldst profit by calamity, old man; with thy grave open at thy feet, wouldst overreach a wild, disordered mind.

Ich. Ha! Thou hast the old charity, meek monk.

Fran. Hence! know we not thy race?—thy sordid subtlety towards Christian men?

Ich. If we are subtle, we are that which ye have made us. Our race! ye treat us as we were a lot of loathsome worms, and then marvel if we sometimes crawl.

Fran. Oh! I know the Hebrew heart; our sorrows are its food—our joys its poison.

Ich. Father Francis, two days ago thou didst beg of me—

Fran. Beg! Jew!

Ich. Well, well. There are, thou saidst, prisoners—Christian prisoners, in the city fort. Young bones, crooked with the weight of chains, rivetted by Christian hands. The State demands a crushing ransom: thou and thy brethren—I praise the zeal—would gather monies for their freedom. Thou didst ask my money.

Fran. And when I told thee of the withering husband, the miserable father—spake of the worn and heart-sick wife—thou didst hear my tale—thou, an old man, didst hear with ears of stone. More: when I told thee of the child—the captive's child—the poor innocent, barred from its father's neck—dost thou remember?

Ich. Yes.

Fran. Thy face beamed with a horrid light—thine eyes trembled beneath their lids—thy pale lips grinned apart, and thy shaking hand did grasp thy breast as though a snake were moving there.

Ich. I do remember.

Fran. Thou didst strike thy staff upon the earth, and, crouching devilish laughter, turn away.

Ich. I do repent it—I do repent it. The prisoners? Well, they shall have my mite.

Fran. Sayest thou?

Ich. The prisoner's child? Say it were the child, the only darling child of a mere Jew? At how much money should its life be rated?

Fran. Its life?

Ich. I'll tell thee—twenty golden crowns. Nay, it is—it was—the price. Thou art new to our city, but, trust me, it was the price. Believe me, it hath been paid.

Fran. Tears! old man!

Ich. Hush! thou shalt have forty golden crowns.

Fran. Forty?

Ich. Peace: I feel a strange happiness that I can say it. Enough. I came not here to overreach, I came to sell mine own. See'st thou a picture—'tis there, I think—the portrait of a child?

(*Pointing with his staff to picture on the floor.*)

Fran. Aye.

Ich. It is the child of Roderick.

Fran. Of Roderick?

Ich. Years ago I bought it of him; now he would re-purchase it.

Fran. Aye?

Ich. 'Tis a girl—is't not—a child, some five years old, sitting on a bank? In her right hand she has an opening rose; three buds, plucked from its stalk, lie on the earth. To the left is a dish of fruit; grapes, pines, oranges, pomegranates. And look, thou'lt see amongst it the scales of a coiled adder; it lies in shadow, but near the black cluster its eyes are burning and its fang is out.

Fran. The painter had some meaning in those fallen buds—that mortal reptile?

Ich. I thought so—asked him if he had not. He shivered from the crown to the sole, but made no answer. On a turned vine-leaf there is a drop of water worth a diamond.

Fran. Thou hast well painted the picture. Images dwell in thy mind in their first beauty.

Ich. I am thankful—aye; and therefore is the blind man not all dark, but, with the eyes of his soul, can see bright things. Farewell. I'll send the crowns by the boy who leads me. He stays below. What, Isaac!

Enter ANSON, L. H.

Fran. Hast thou told thy master?

Ans. Alas! I know his mood—he may not now be spoken with. Pale as marble, his motionless eye dreaming on the empty air, he sits as in a trance. (*Francis is about to go.*) Yet go not, father; he may recover soon, and much he needs thy help.

Fran. I'll tarry, and yet I know not—

Enter ISAAC—he is about to lead off Ichabod.

Stay. (*Sits himself at table and writes.*) Ichabod, in thy way home, thou dost pass the convent of the Carmelites—nay, 'tis not fifty paces from this house—let thy boy leave this letter for the abbess.

Ich. Have the holy sisterhood pincers at the gate to take it from his hand?—spices and vinegar to make sweet the missive touched by a Jew?

Fran. They'll give thee thanks, and pray thy heart be turned.

Ans. (*Looking at Isaac.*) A face, frank—open—honest—and—

Ich. And yet—a Jew. (*Francis puts letter in Ichabod's hand.*) He shall take the letter, father.

[*Exit, led off by Isaac, R. H.*]

Fran. Hast thou long dwelt with this estranged man?

Ans. Six years—no more; and then his malady was new upon him.

Fran. And 'tis not now so raging?

Ans. But, I fear me, deeper fixed. Then, indeed, I have known him stand before yon cabinet for three whole days, three weary nights—now muttering with clenched hands and streaming lids, and now, breathless and gazing with unmoved eyes; food, and sleep, and all familiar things forgot.

Fran. Yet on all other subjects he is calm, nay wise?

Ans. Thou shalt hear him talk a lecture—speak opinions full of rarest knowledge—dissect men's motives with a teacher's skill. Then, breathe a doubt of his wild tale,—say, his daughter is not dead,—and he will start away as though he looked upon a leper.

Fran. I bless the choice that led me to a cloister.

Children are earthly idols, that hold us from the stars.

Ans. That is her picture.

Fran. And in that gentle face what promise of kind thoughts—of sweet companionship for middle age—of softest ministrings for drear grey hairs! Yet, 'tis that smiling, radiant thing, hath stung a father into madness. Again, I bless the heavens for my hood!

Ans. The sight of it but feeds—hark!—did he not call?

Fran. I heard nothing; but go—observe him. A lone woman with her child hath travelled to our city, to beg her husband's freedom. The holy Carmelites have lodged, and comforted her. I have bid the abbess send her hither.

Ans. For what purpose?

Fran. She shall beg the helping purse of Roderick. Nay, I am earnest in the thought.

[Exit Anson, L. H.]

Enter SERVANT, R. H.

Ser. A poor woman from the Carmelites.

Fran. Admit her. (Exit Servant.) And this new poison, though warily, must be denied him.

(Throws a cloak over the picture, entirely concealing it.)

Enter EUPHEMIA, veiled, and meanly dressed, R. H.

Euph. Save ye, holy father!

Fran. Cheer thee, my child—take comfort. Our prayers have touched men's hearts—even the hearts of unbelievers. The ransom—a ransom won by Christian charity from softened foes, will soon be paid: thy husband will be free. I tell thee this,—and still thou wearest a haggard face—a look of sharper misery. Where hast thou been?

Euph. Where an old grief hath risen with armed strength—where old faces, with frowns they never had before, have looked upon me—where old voices, old, but changed, have spoken to me.

Fran. What fearful place is this?

Euph. A sister's grave.

Fran. I thought thee a stranger to our city?

Euph. I was a child—would they had laid me with the dead!—when I was taken hence.

Fran. And thou hast sought thy sister's monument?

Euph. There is no thing to mark the spot—no tablet, stone, or wooden cross—and yet I knew it.

Fran. Indeed?

Euph. Oh, father! the children of the poor have curious memories. Death comes not to their home a stately summoner, veiling its hideousness with robes and plumes; but stauds, and strikes upon the poor man's hearth,—a naked, foul, and cruel thing.

Fran. But ever brings a blessing to the house prepared.

Euph. My father begged some earth to hide the jewel of his home. I was a child,—an infant; but this morning, standing there, I saw it all again. Saw my sweet sister, my dear playmate, laid in the deep clay—heard the white-haired priest murmur a prayer—beheld my father, swelling with mute agony—

Fran. Daughter!

Euph. Saw him quiver like a reed, when the earth fell. He caught me to his breast, and his tears gushed upon my face, and so he stood, until the earth rose to his foot. Then, mastering his tears, he turned away—but, oh! that leaden look of desolation.

Fran. Be calm! Thou wilt be heard—

Euph. I had forgotten. I come in duty to thy bidding.

Fran. I have a patient here—a sick, disordered mind. I want thy healing help.

Euph. Mine?

Fran. Press thy suit upon him—beg his bounty for the prisoners,—tell him all thy miseries. For if I can sometimes wean his soul to fix itself on stranger woes, I shall not yet despair of perfect health. Thou wilt assist me?

Euph. With my weak skill? Oh, yes!

Fran. And thy child, too—nay, I have not seen it.

Euph. 'Tis with the sisters—a mother's blessing on them!

Fran. Its innocence might haply soften him.

Euph. From what proceeds his malady?

Fran. A daughter lost.

Euph. Dead? Happy daughter!

Fran. Not dead—but hence, the fantasy that preys upon his brain, and on that theme alone, shuts out all reason. His child deserted him; and his mind, shaken by former griefs, hath sunk beneath a daughter's cruelty.

Euph. Made mad by his own child?

Fran. Alas!

Euph. And thou wouldst have me comfort him?

Fran. Aye.

Euph. Thou wouldst not place a serpent at a sick man's pillow? Thou wouldst not have me speak to him!

Fran. Daughter!

Euph. Were he warped and withered—harsh to the ear—loathsome to the eye—my guilt would give to him the form, the face, the gracious looks and tender voice of my own father. Comfort him! I should fall a felon at his foot.

Fran. Woman!

Euph. Oh, curse me not, although thy curse is but a word! The curse within me is a living thing.

Fran. Is it so? Thou too has left a parent? Say, was he tyrannous or—

Euph. No—no—no! The kindest father—the noblest man—the truest gentleman that ever breathed.

Fran. And thou couldst leave him? I guess the madness,—love?

Euph. We feign him a child—a smiling, blissful child. Oh, it was some fiend that tore my heart out, and made vile my nature! But no—I did not think to quit him. I wrote and wrote, and begged forgiveness—he replied not. I flew to find him—he had wandered, none knew whither. The war began—I had not means to seek him. My husband was made prisoner by my countrymen, and I became a begging alien in my native land.

Fran. Thy sin was great—thy penance must be answerable. Hear me! I charge thee, address thyself to my poor patient, tend—

Euph. It is impossible—I cannot.

Fran. See—he comes. Stay!

Euph. Father, set me any task of suffering—scourge my spirit as thou wilt—and I will do, endure, it. This, I cannot do.

Fran. (Detaining her.) Look! his head is turned upon us, though he sees us not. Mark his white face—his glazing look of vacancy—mark—

Euph. Merciful God! it is my father!

(Falling at his feet)

Fran. (Raising her.) Thy father!

Euph. Oh, thou knewest this!

Fran. By my bright saint, no! Oh, happy providence! Stay!

Euph. Nor couldst thou turn this house to gold, and give it me, to stay. My father!

Fran. I command thee,—stay!

Euph. Inflict what pain thou wilt, I will be tractable. There is no penance—none that can shake me. The iron girdle and the knotted rope—fasting and barefoot pilgrimage—ashes on my head—fire in my path—my black crime writ and hung about my neck,—doom me to aught of these or all,—I will not murmur. Nay, bid me give my hand—the wedded hand that slew a father's mind,—to some wild beast, and I will do it. But here, I cannot—will not—dare not, stay?

Fran. And yet thou hast hoped—hast sought to meet him?

Euph. Not mad—not mad! Oh, worst of parricides, to kill a father's mind!

Fran. Woman,—hold, and hear me! Thou hast struck thy father to the earth,—and wilt not help to raise him? Thou hast run a dagger in his flesh,—wilt let the wound bleed on? Thou hast driven a thorn in his poor brain,—wilt thou not pluck it out?

Euph. Mercy! mercy!

Fran. By thy mother's grave, thy father's misery—by thy captive husband, fettered in a dungeon,—by his child that hath lain in thy bosom,—by the last throb of thy heart, when this world shall swim away, and light or darkness shall be thy lot—

Euph. Mercy!

Fran. I do command thee. Child of sin and sorrow—stay!

Euph. (*Falling on her knees.*) I am thine—do with me what thou wilt.

Fran. He comes.

Euph. Not yet—not yet.

Fran. Your pity, kindest saints!—your balm for these sad wounds!

Euph. (*Clinging to him.*) His foot! It treads upon my heart!

Fran. See! his face hath changed; and now, serenely smiling, he gives direction to his servant. Look!

Euph. I can look at death; but not at that, next heaven most terrible, an injured father's face.

Fran. Be calm—be hopeful. Stand apart—I will prepare him.

Euph. Father, I cannot—I feel I cannot. Oh, say, what hope—what aid can come of this? (*Despairingly.*) What can I do?

Fran. Pray!

(*He commandingly motions her to retire. She obeys, and is seen at intervals from behind the cabinet.*)

Enter RODERICK, L. H.

Rod. Save ye, father!

Fran. Save ye, my son! I have expected you.

Rod. Father, I have been sitting with the dead; and though men are wont to pay them little courtesy, it is not my custom. Poor things! we heap upon our own flesh heavy, dismal earth,—and pass a year, a month, a week,—and we think of it no more than if some mole had heaved the hillock up. I ask you,—is this kind, is this gentle, to the dead?

Fran. And yet we best may think of death by thinking of our lives. Thou hast promised me thy history?

Rod. A poor, torn leaf—blotted with tears.

Fran. I have read many such. May I claim thy promise?

Rod. My life! It is written in the epitaphs of all I loved. Well, I will approach the grave, and read it thee. (*They sit.*)

Fran. (*Aside.*) And so to lead him to his daughter.

Rod. Fortune gave to me a happy youth. The sordidness of life, its miserable wants, degrading by their clinging littleness, I never knew them until I was a husband and a father. Thou art a monk, and though thou hast seen much mortal misery, thou dost not know that pang. Thou canst not feel—thou canst not comprehend the agony of that dread hour, when wife and children, things that were given us to garland life, are turned by want into a crown of thorns.

Fran. Aye—thou hadst children?

Rod. Four. Dead!

Fran. All?

Rod. All.

Euph. (*Unable to repress herself.*) Father!

(*She shrinks behind the cabinet.*)

Fran. Didst thou hear nothing?

Rod. Yes; but be not thou afraid. It is one of them.

Fran. Thou dost remember it?

Rod. It is one of the sweet voices that do sometimes talk to me.

Fran. Alas!

Rod. In the free air they come like singing-birds about me. And sometimes at night I hear them near my face. Last night, they were all with me. And there was one arm, one soft, round, little arm—it was Euphemia's—close about my neck, close about my neck.

Euph. (*Aside.*) Parricide!

Fran. And died they young?

Rod. Aye—look there. (*Pointing to pictures on the wall.*) My father's enmity ceased with his life—he left me fortune. For the last five years I have travelled to possess them—at any cost have made them mine.

Fran. The pictures of thy children?

Rod. Of my lost babes. In my poverty, their painted beauties bought them bread.

Fran. And they are gone before—and wait to welcome thee. Happy father!

Rod. Happy! But thou art a monk.

Fran. They were deemed too fair, too fragile, for a long pilgrimage, and heaven called them home again.

Rod. Mark that: my first-born, a child, nursing a lamb. Oh, her eye was as a star for thought to dwell upon! her voice,—'twould almost touch the hearer into tears. She died!

Fran. The second?

Rod. Dear Adolph! His mother's face—his mother's spirit. A frank, noble, tender, loving thing. He died!

Fran. The next?

Rod. Oh, father! is that a face for worms? And, oh! the light of happiness that shone upon it! The squirrel at her foot was not more blithe—had not more graceful life in its quick limbs. She died!

Fran. The fourth?

Rod. Why, Anson!

Enter ANSON, L. H.

Who dared do that? Speak! Who dared to hang that pall between a father and his child?

Fran. (Taking cloak from picture.) I will remove it.

Rod. Euphemia—oh, Euphemia!

Fran. (Having whispered to Anson.) Haste—delay not! [*Exit Anson, R. H.*] The fourth?

Rod. She died!

Euph. (Aside.) Oh, the happiness of death!

Rod. (Pointing to picture on the wall.) Look there—a Hebe, pouring nectar. 'Twas her mother.

Euph. Mother!

(*Kneeling to it.*)

Rod. (Hearing her.) Hush! 'tis gone! It was painted ere she was my wife; in after years, was taken from me by the law. I have journeyed many a league; but 'tis mine again—both mine—the mother, and the child the mother died for.

Fran. Thou hast had thy sorrows; still, have hope.

Rod. I have. The shadow is before me, and now it smiles and points into a grave. Where should hope lead me, if not to join all these? I fear—it is a sin—pray tell me—I cannot help it—do not chide—but I fear I love that child something more than I love the others.

Euph. (Aside.) Have mercy, Heaven!

Fran. Art very sure she's dead?

Rod. Would she have left her father else? Oh, it would be horrible to doubt, though long I doubted!

Fran. Thou didst?

Rod. Then—then I was mad. No one knew it; but I was mad. And then I prayed, and I was comforted.

Fran. Yea; always.

Rod. The things I saw—the sounds I heard! Creatures with bloody beaks and cold blue eyes, and yet men, tearing each other! And ghastly shows, and holidays of death, and masks, where men vizored their faces from living beasts, snarled and rent like foxes, wolves, and then would smile again and speak like men! But children—children!

Fran. Good son!

Rod. Oh, they were always beautiful! I met a troop of the sweet innocents. I looked for mine, and found Euphemia. I hugged her to my breast; she had some wild flowers in her hand, and, smiling, laid them at my heart, when they became—

Euph. Father!

(*She rushes down, and falls in the arms of Francis, who hides her from Roderick.*)

Rod. Father!

Fran. No; she called on me. (Aside, to her.) Not yet—'tis not the time. She is a poor petitioner for mercy; her husband lies a captive in the fort. I bade her come to thee in aid of ransom, though not thus suddenly.

Rod. Where is thy father?

Fran. Speak not of him. It is her malady to think him dead, though still he lives.

Rod. Strange phantasy! Heaven help poor human wits!

Fran. She hath been a wayward, disobedient child; but she repents in bitterness.

Rod. But doth she pray? Harken! I will discover to ye both what prayer hath done for me. Who's there?

Fran. I hear no one.

Rod. Thou dost look for some one. Nay; I see thou dost.

Fran. A child—they say, the lovely child of—

Rod. Peace! The beauty of children is a terror—a fearful loveliness! No children!

Fran. 'Tis only an infant—a—

Rod. Only! Dost thou not know their subtlety? Hast thou not read or known the jugglers of the world exposed by babes?—by children, who silent sit at the fireside, and after many years tell how the trick was done—show what poor mountebanks the world has gaped at? No children!

Fran. Thou hadst a story?

Rod. Mark the worth of prayer. When Euphemia lay on her death-bed—

Euph. (Aside.) Hopeless agony!

Rod. I prayed she might be spared me. It might not be. Day after day, Death's shadow grew upon her; and then I prayed for grace, that I might take some note, some record of the sweet features fading—fading from me. I prayed and prayed. At length a spirit stood before me! Look not with that cold eye of doubt—I say, a winged messenger from God! My prayer was heard—the time allowed. For two days I toiled at my task. Thou shalt see the picture—it is there. My nature was sublimed, ennobled for the work. For two days I felt no human want. My task was done—Euphemia went to heaven!

Euphemia's CHILD runs on—followed by ANSON, R. H.

Child. Mother!

Rod. And see, they bring her back to me! (*Seizing the child in his arms.*) Again a child—again a happy, lovely, spotless child!

Fran. (Aside to Euphemia.) Thy very image as 'tis painted there.

Rod. I see what 'tis we find in heaven. We lose the soil, the taint, the guilt of later days, and are made for ever joyous little children. Why dost thou seowl upon me? Is it not my child—mine? Nay, thou shalt see the holy work—compare—

(*Advances towards cabinet, when Euphemia throwing off her veil, stands before him.*)

Euph. Father!

Rod. Mighty God! Can the grave do that?

Euph. Father, dost thou not know me?

Rod. Yes. Thou art Euphemia—thou art that we laid in the grave—and that—(*Pointing to child*)—that is thy bright soul.

(*Falls in the arms of Francis, and is supported to the couch.*)

Euph. Father! Thou wilt not cast me off?

Rod. Poor spectre—no! There—(*Embracing her*)—closer—lay thy head nearer. Thou shalt not leave me; no—thou shalt not leave me—we will go together.

Euph. He dies!

Fran. No.

Rod. My brain seemed but now to leave me.

Fran. Ha! his eye brightens with a new-born health.

Rod. Euphemia!

Euph. He knows me still.

Rod. I have been sick—Oh, pray for me!

Fran. Hush!

Rod. Euphemia!

(*Falls into a sleep.*)

Euph. He sleeps!

Fran. Prayer must do the rest.

(*They kneel about the couch of Roderick.*)

CURTAIN.

1 0 2 ;
OR, THE VETERAN AND HIS PROGENY.
A PETITE COMEDY, IN ONE ACT.

BY H. M. MILNER.

First Performed at the Coburg Theatre, 1827.



Dramatis Personæ.

[See page 11.]

PHILIP GARBOIS (an Invalid Soldier, aged 102)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. Davidge.
JEROME (his Son, a farmer, aged 80)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. Meredith.
PIERRE (Son of Jerome, a retired soldier, aged 50)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. Lewis.
ANTOINE (Son of Pierre, colonel of a regiment of the line, aged 29)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. Hemmings.
THEODORE (Son of Antoine, aged 6)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Master Meyers.
FRANCOIS (a Gardener)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. Buckstone.
MADAME LEROND (an Innkeeper)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mrs. Weston.
ISABEL (her Daughter)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Miss Boden.
LOUISE (Wife of Antoine)	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mrs. Lewis.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.—One Hour and Fifteen Minutes.

COSTUME.

PHILIP GARBOIS.—French square-cut uniform, with sword-belt and sword—very white crop wig, with but few locks of hair on it.

JEROME.—Brown coat and breeches—dark waistcoat—shoes—dark blue stockings—light iron-grey wig.

PIERRE.—Semi-military undress—brown wig—foraging cap.

ANTOINE.—Colonel's uniform—covered at first by military cloak.

FRANCOIS.—1st dress: Lively peasant's dress. 2nd dress: Dragoon's full uniform.

MADAME LEROND.—Chintz gown and bodice—white apron—high cap.

ISABEL.—Smart peasant's dress—striped silk apron, &c.

LOUISE.—Brown silk dress, scarf, &c.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; D. F. *Door in Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*; L. U. E. *Left Upper Entrance*; R. U. E. *Right Upper Entrance*; L. S. E. *Left Second Entrance*; P. S. *Prompt Side*; O. P. *Opposite Prompt*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.—R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R.C. *Right of Centre*; L.C. *Left of Centre*.

R.

RC.

C

LC.

L.

* * * The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

SCENE.—A Country View. On one side (R.) the Inn, before which stands a large tree—the overhanging branches of which form a complete bower. On the other side Jerome's cottage.

Enter MADAME LEROND, from the Inn, meeting ISABEL, who enters with a basket in her hand.

Mad. L. Isabel! Isabel! Where are you, Isabel?

Isa. Here I am, mother.

Mad. L. Come, look sharp about you. Prepare the breakfast for the good old veteran under this tree. You know to-day is the anniversary of his first battle, and it is to him the grandest day in the year.

Isa. Oh, don't imagine that I have forgot it. It does one's heart good to look on the old man when his spirits are raised by such a celebration. Though upwards of an hundred years old, he is firm on his feet, quick with his eye, and as for his appetite—

Mad. I don't suppose it was better when he walked thirty miles a day to the ruba dub dub!

Isa. How fortunate he is in having such a son as old Jerome. Why he watches, and tends, and nurses him like a sucking child.

Mad. L. He does no more than his duty.

Isa. He takes a great deal more notice of him than he does of his own son.

Mad. L. What, sturdy Pierre! He wants no looking after. He has a pension that he can live on. At fifty years old he is as hearty and lively as a new recruit, and I even think that he sometimes casts a lover's eye at you.

Isa. Ah, he may cast what eyes he pleases. Master Pierre has had his day. He has been married once.

Mad. L. Well, but he is now a widower—

Isa. So much the better for him. I am not going to have an old invalid soldier for my husband. I must have a man sound and hearty, that has never had his limbs knocked about by the cannon balls.

Mad. L. But your favourite, François—

Isa. Has been in the army, I know—but he, I am sure, has suffered no damage in the wars, and he is every day expecting his papers that will entitle him to a pension.

Mad. L. Aye, that's all very well to talk about. The papers don't seem to come in any hurry, and the pension is neither here nor there.

Isa. Well, in the meantime he can work. He is a clever gardener, and an honest man, and I'm sure I don't think he would go to deceive a poor young girl. He has served in the Hussars, and if his papers would but come to-day, I should be so happy!

Mad. L. Aye, aye—trust to my experience, daughter. I know a little of these matters. Don't be in such a hurry to be in love, for fear it may finish too early.

Isa. Now for my part, mother, I think, to make

it last as long as possible, one can't begin too soon.

Mad. L. Well, lay the cloth and see and get the breakfast. (*Aside.*) Since this girl has got love into her head, I think she is bewitched, for my part! Ah! she is the very counterpart of her mother! I was just the same at her age!

[Exit into the inn, E. H.]

Isa. (*Laying the table.*) Aye, this is the veteran's place—under this tree—which is as old as himself. The hatchet of the woodcutters has hitherto respected it—and as for storms, wind, lightning, and thunder, it has resisted all, like the veteran himself, whom neither balls nor sabres could ever beat down, and who now seems to bid defiance to time itself. There—there is his little bottle of Bourdeaux wine—of which he won't leave a single drop! Oh, what a devil of a fellow he must have been when he was a young man, to be sure!

JEROME and PIERRE advance cautiously from the Farm, L. H., on each side of her.

Jer. Well, we are all chips of the old block!

Isa. Aye—it isn't such devils of fellows as you that I am afraid of, though!

Pierre. No? We'll soon show you what we are! (*Attempts to kiss her.*)

Jer. Will you be quiet, you audacious little rattle, you?

Isa. Whilst you are putting yourself in a stew, there, here's the breakfast on the table getting cold!

Jer. Aye, Pierre—let us fall to on solidier food than love, my boy!

Isa. What, and will you think of settling down without the old gentleman?

Pierre. What, do you mean grandfather! Oh, don't fancy that he is fasting at this time of day? No, no—he masticated the drumstick of a turkey, and found his way to the bottom of a bottle some hours ago.

Jer. Laws, how it has amused me for this week past to see him polishing up his old sabre, whitening his belt, and rubbing the buttons, and brushing his old uniform.

Isa. That uniform which he never wears but upon high days and holidays.

Jer. And would you believe it, he has actually shaved himself this very morning? I wished to hinder him—"Stand aside! (*said he*)—this soldier's hand never yet trembled—it won't begin to-day." Upon my word, Pierre, I think the old boy now is a better man than either you or me.

Isa. I'm entirely of your way of thinking. Ha! ha! ha!

[Exit into inn, R. H., laughing.]

Pierre. Speak for yourself, if you please, father! To be sure, I married too young. I didn't know what I was about then. I knew little of the pleasures of marriage—still less of those of a father. Poor Antoine! He had the family disorder. At

fourteen he started as a drummer. I have not heard of him these ten years—so I suppose some bullet—

Jer. Aye—there's no warding off those blows. But zounds, son, on such a day as this let us think of something more cheering.

Pierre. It won't do, father, to let a family of brave fellows like ours be extinguished—and if I can but get Miss Isabel into the humour—

Jer. And I don't see why she shouldn't. Besides you know my father has promised to ask her himself this very day.

Philip. (*Heard without, R., singing.*) "What is life without love—without women divine?"

Jer. There—do you hear how the old cock chants to the last?

PHILIP enters, singing the same line.—*Jerome* and *Pierre* go forward to meet him.

Pierre. How cheerful you are, grandfather! It does one's heart good to hear you!

Phil. Cheerful! Why should I be otherwise, you young dog? Drums and trumpets! I came into the world crying, and it will never do to go out of it to the same music.

Pierre. But recollect, grandfather, you are to speak for me to Miss Isabel to-day.

Phil. Look at me, boys! Did you ever see me look handsomer? Haven't I my gala dress on? Don't I look spruce in my brushed up uniform, and fit to make a request to a lady?

Pierre. Then pray do, as soon as possible, grandfather.

Jer. (*To Pierre.*) What an impatient young dog you are, to be sure!

Phil. Well, well, son, we must make allowances for the fire of youth. You and I have been young in our time. Ah, I recollect I had a pretty life to keep you from the girls, you wild dog! I was obliged to knock you down, you scapegrace! Oh, you were a devil of a fellow!

Jer. Yes, I was a devil of a fellow!

Phil. And so was I, boy—ha! ha!

Pierre. And so am I, grandfather—ha! ha!

All. Ha! ha!

Phil. We're rare dogs—we are!

Pierre. Now you won't forget, grandfather? Consider, I'm all impatience—

Phil. Pshaw! psha! Go you and make every preparation for our little festival. I will meantime speak to the young creature for you—and if she can refuse me she has a harder heart and worse taste than I gave her credit for.

Pierre. But don't you think I'd better remain with you, grandfather, for then I could speak, too.

Phil. You speak, you blockhead? How should a young thing like you know how to speak? Leave all to my discretion. I know how to tickle the fancies of the young girls. I'm an old soldier, boy, and know the way to do it. Ha! ha!

Jer. Come, come, you inexperienced greenhorn. Don't you see your grandfather understands these things better than you?

Phil. Away with you! Leave it all to me, Pierre. To the right-about face.

[*Jerome* drags *Pierre* away, R. H. A presumptuous urchin that would argue the point with his grandfather! As if I didn't know how to manage the dear creatures. Why I began with them upwards of eighty years ago—and upon my word I have had no reason to complain of their hard-heartedness from that time to this.

SONG.—PHILIP.

*Though Time its snows hath sprinkled
Across my silver brow,
And many a furrow wrinkled,
His scythe's deep print can show.*

*Yet still the tyrant's rigour
My soul cannot subdue—
Within subsists a vigour,
Which daily joys renew.
Though time its snows, &c.*

Ah, if my courage in the field of battle had been half as well rewarded as my boldness in love, I should have nothing to desire at this time of day—whereas my heart is now always yearning after one thing, and without it I could never die content. Without saying a word to anyone, I have forwarded a memorial. Ay, ay—on the evening after the battle, where I carried that redoubt, "Bravo! bravo, Philip Garbois!" (said all my comrades)—"honours and rewards will rain thick upon you!" But the devil a bit have I seen of them! This is the only affliction I ever encountered in my life, and it has been preying at my heart for those sixty years. Every time I see the end of a red ribbon sticking out of a button-hole, my heart beats as if it would break, my eyes fill with tears, and—But pshaw! I won't think any more about it! I know there are so many brave fellows to reward that it can't all be done in a day. I think, however, that I have waited a tolerably long while, and if the honour is to find anybody to receive it, it's almost time that it had arrived!

Enter ISABEL, R. H

Isa. Ah, neighbour Philip—how spruce you look to-day, to be sure!

Phil. And you still more lovely—you little demi-angel.

Isa. Upon my word, neighbour Philip, you are as polite and gallant as any young man in the village.

Phil. And much more sincere, my pretty Isabel. Young men compliment your sex for the favours they hope to receive—old ones in gratitude for those they have before enjoyed. But sit down on this chair, child—I have something to say to you.

Isa. To be sure I will—for I'm certain I can refuse you nothing.

Phil. Aye, you little witch—you daren't have said as much to me only eighty years ago. But listen. You are young, handsome, and prudent, and quite old enough to get married. This day ought to be propitious, love—and I am accordingly about to ask your hand.

Isa. To ask my hand, Father Philip?

Phil. Aye—and your heart, too—if you have one about you.

Isa. One about me! Oh, yes—of course I have a heart.

Phil. Let me feel. (*Putting his hand on her side.*) Ah—there it is—bump! bump! pat! pat! tip! tap!

Isa. (*Sighing.*) Oh, dear!

Phil. Ah, you little rogue! I don't think you have come honestly by it, or you would not sigh so loudly.

Isa. It's what my father and mother gave me, sir. But you don't consider how you squeezed me.

Phil. Ha, ha! Squeezed you, eh? I've some pith in my old branches yet. The old boy can

make the girls sigh yet. But to the point. You say you have a heart?

Isa. Yes, sir.

Phil. Well, give it me—I want it!

Isa. You? Lord, sir! what are you thinking about? My dear Father Philip, don't you know that you are a hundred and two, and I am scarcely twenty? No, I thank ye, good Mr. December—ha, ha!

Phil. Ah—you laugh, you little rogue! But it is not for myself. No, no—that would be joining the end and the beginning sadly. What do you think of my son?

Isa. What, Mr. Jerome? He is a very good man; but—

Phil. But not the man for your money, you would say. It is not him that I mean. It's for a young creature who is burning for you with a flame so ardent—

Isa. (*Aside.*) Can he mean my dear François?

Phil. But young as he is, he is not absolutely a raw recruit. He has made more than one campaign.

Isa. (*Aside.*) He must mean François. (*Aloud.*) Go on—go on, Father Philip. I have always had the greatest respect for brave fellows.

Phil. Well, then, my dear—this brave fellow is my grandson, Pierre.

Isa. Mr. Pierre! Oh—yes—why—ah—that is a very different thing.

Phil. A different thing! How do you mean a different thing?

(*He rises—she gives him her arm.*)

Isa. Why, I mean that Mr. Pierre is a brave man, but there is another brave man—

Phil. Another? Some thousands I should hope in the empire.

Isa. Yes—but now François—

Phil. What, the gardener?

Isa. He has been a soldier, sir!

Phil. Oh, he has? And you love him?

(FRANÇOIS and PIERRE appear
U. E. L., H.)

Isa. Yes, that I do!

Phil. Oh! you do? Then perhaps you would like to marry him?

Isa. Of course I should!

(*François and Pierre have meantime advanced softly on opposite sides.*)

Fran. (*Aside, L.*) Ha! They are talking about me!

Phil. Why then, as to poor Pierre—

Pierre. Ha—my name in question? Then he has asked her!

Isa. I have not a word to say about Mr. Pierre—but as for François, I must and will have him?

Pierre. (*Coming forward, R.*) We shall see that. Hem! As the matter stands now, grandfather, it must be discussed no further either by women or by old men.

Phil. Old men? old men? How dare you call your grandfather an old man? What does the fellow mean by his insolence?

Fran. (*Advancing.*) He is quite right, neighbour Philip. I honour and respect you as deeply as I love Isabel, but this affair now lies between Pierre and me. I have been a soldier—I am a man—

Phil. And who the devil said you were a woman? Pierre, by the authority which relationship to you commands, I desire you to follow me.

Pierre. I am not a boy, grandfather. (*Aside.*) I shall do no such thing!

Phil. And am I a boy, eh? Follow me, Pierre!

(*He attempts to advance.*) Well, well—how you all stare! Is any one going to give me their arm?

Fran. (*Offering his.*) Take mine, Father Philip.

Pierre. (*Hastily thrusting between them, and taking the arm of Philip.*) Mind your own business. This is my post. Hark ye, François—we shall meet again!

Fran. Whenever you please, sir.

Pierre. (*Dragging back Philip.*) We'll soon settle this matter, Mr. François.

Fran. The quicker the better!

Pierre. (*Again dragging back Philip.*) You'll find I know how to handle a weapon.

Fran. It will not be my first acquaintance with one.

Phil. Pistols and bullets! Am I to be pulled to pieces, you great lubberly boy? (*He attempts to kick Pierre but has not strength enough.—As they go out.*) Baby! Infant! If I could but lift my leg high enough, I'd kick you to Pekin in China!

[*Exeunt into Inn R. H.*]

Isa. What a brute that Pierre is. And you, Mr. François—you have not hurried yourself this morning, sir.

Fran. I have been occupied in levying from nature the tribute which I thus pay to beauty.

(*Kneels and presents her with a nosegay.*)

Isa. (*Aside.*) How gallant for a gardener! And pray of what is this nosegay composed?

Fran. Of every flower that can compare with your charms. There are roses for your cheeks—lilies for your white forehead—blue violets for your twinkling eyes—snowdrops for your teeth—love lies a-bleeding for those lips I have so often bit in kissing, and bachelor's buttons peeping out of the group for myself.

Isa. Upon my word, Mr. François, if I were not accustomed to hear all these fine things every day from you, I should blush—but as it is, I shall do no such thing. Believe all you say—think you very insinuating, and admire your gallantry! And now, Mr. François—you say you have been a soldier and admire candour—

Fran. As much as I do you, you bouquet of beauty!

Isa. I am going to put a very plain question to you.

Fran. A plain question from a pretty woman can never come amiss.

Isa. But I do come a miss—because I want to know when we are to be married?

Fran. Do you want to know?

Isa. Of course I do.

Fran. Well then, my daffodil, the moment my papers arrive from Paris granting me a pension.

Isa. Not till then? Dear me, they are a very long time coming. Couldn't we manage it before they come?

Fran. Bless your little heart! Look at me—I am now only a gardener. All I can earn is a shilling a day and my tea. But I'll marry you immediately if you think we can live upon love and bread and butter.

Isa. Oh, dear! What a pity it is that money is obliged to be a principal item in matrimonial matters. But I suppose I must be patient.

Fran. Yes, Isabel—and constant.

Isa. (*Going.*) Yes, François—and constant.

Fran. And you won't think of Mr. Pierre?

Isa. What, Mr. October? Old Mr. December's grandson. Oh dear, no. The budding blossoms of

Spring must always claim preference to the falling leaves of Autumn.

Fran. And you'll continue in that mind, by—

Isa. By what?

Fran. This kiss.

(*He kisses her. She runs into the house.*)

Fran. And should I suffer that charming creature to be carried off by a sucking foot soldier—and a fellow that's old enough to be her father, too? No, no. I'll soon let him see that it is no easy work for the infantry to make an attack on the baggage of the Hussars.

Enter PIERRE, R. H.

Pierre. Now, sir—I was seeking for you.

Fran. I am here, sir, and waiting for you.

Pierre. Well, sir, then we have met.

Fran. Yes, sir, and it also appears that we have met in our choice in love.

Pierre. We must now, then, try our fortune in the field of war.

Fran. Yes, sir, you will not find me backward.

Pierre. I suppose you can fire a pistol, sir?

Fran. A twenty-four pounder, sir, if you've no objection.

Pierre. And pray who gave you leave to love Miss Isabel?

Fran. I gave myself leave. Yes. You are older than myself, it's true, sir—but you are not my commander, sir—and if you were town major of the place, love would go free without waiting for your countersign.

Pierre. But don't think I'm going to suffer a break-neck fellow of a horse-soldier to carry off my lass.

Fran. And why not, sir?

Pierre. Because you have not the courage to fight for her.

Fran. Oh, sir, you're very much mistaken. I can fight, sir, with any weapon, at any time, in any place, for any woman, and with any man!

Pierre. Then meet me this evening.

Fran. Where?

Pierre. Here!

Fran. Very well, sir! Name your weapons!

Pierre. Sabres and blunderbuss!

Fran. Very well.

Pierre. Very well. And if you do carry off my mistress, you must be clever enough to do it without your head!

(*Exit into farm.*)

Fran. Ha, ha! Poor old gentleman! I won't hurt him, if I can avoid it. What a conceited fellow! A foot soldier, and think to get the better of me at cut and thrust. Ha, ha! Well, I won't kill him quite, I'll seek for my sabre, and—

Enter ANTOINE, U. E. L. H. in a plain riding coat, but a cross hanging to it.

Ant. Friend, is not this the village of St. Marcel?

Fran. It is, sir. (*Aside.*) Dear me—an officer!

Ant. (*Aside.*) I have at length, then, reached the place of my destination. How impatient I feel to know the object of my journey. (*Aloud.*) Can you tell me which is the best inn in the village?

Fran. Yes, sir, that is it. And I have the less hesitation in pronouncing it to be the best, as it is the only one.

Ant. Then my choice is the easier made. (*Opening a packet.*) And I may now inform myself for what purpose I am sent hither. On my return from

Spain, where I received a severe wound, I am ordered to proceed to the village of St. Marcel, and not to open this packet till I shall have reached it. It contains, doubtless, some papers of importance to some of the inhabitants of the town.

Fran. (*Aside.*) Papers! They must be mine. I certainly did write to the minister that I was anxious to receive them because I was waiting for them to get married, but I did not think he would send them by an express.

Ant. (*Who has taken off the outside covering of the packet. Reads.*) "You will deliver this packet to its address immediately on your arrival at St. Marcel."

Fran. (*Eagerly advancing.*) Commander—hum! Please to deliver the packet to me.

Ant. Your name, pray!

Fran. François Le Dru—Gardener to the Fifth Regiment of Hussars—that is to say, formerly Quartermaster of the Fifth Hussars, and now gardener to anybody that wants one.

Ant. No—that's not the name. The name is Garbois.

Fran. What? Garbois!

Ant. What do I behold? Is it possible? Tell me, friend—you perhaps know this Mr. Garbois—he is your friend, possibly.

Fran. Possibly he is—for this evening I shall have the pleasure of shooting him through the head, unless he prevents me by doing me that kindness.

Ant. What, is he a soldier?

Fran. Yes—he has served, and so have I:

Ant. And he lives in this village?

Fran. He has done so for the last five years—but he is not of this country.

Ant. Then it must be he.

Fran. Well, if he's your man, that parcel is not mine. But I hear him coming, so I'm off to get ready my blunderbuss and sabre!

(*Salutes Antoine in the military style, and exit U. E. R. H.*)

Ant. Is it possible? Oh, yes—the tumultuous swelling of my breast assures me that it must be he.

Enter PIERRE from house, R. H.

Pierre. You seem a stranger in these parts, sir. Perhaps you are seeking some one.

Ant. Yes, one who is very dear to me.

Pierre. Aye—a first love, perhaps.

Ant. Certainly one whom I loved before all others.

Pierre. (*Aside.*) I'd lay a wager it's that jade, Isabel. She entraps them all. (*Aloud.*) You mean an affection—

Ant. The most sincere—the most ardent!

Pierre. Ah, that's just the tone of them all!

Ant. But tell me, my good man, your name?

Pierre. Pierre Garbois, an invalided soldier—not by my own good will, though. After thirty years of service and twenty campaigns I am as active and joyous as ever—able and willing to serve my king and country to the last drop of my blood. But it's only the young ones that get on nowadays.

Ant. Don't speak slightly of our young soldiers. Have not you a son in the army?

Pierre. My poor Antoine! Don't talk of him, poor fellow. Ah, he was a Garbois! A corporal at sixteen—stripes upon his arm, sir, the year after. Oh, he'd have come to something, sir, if he had lived!

Ant. I knew him.

Pierre. You, sir?

Ant. Indeed, I have kept an account of what became of him. See here.

(Gives him a paper.)

Pierre. (Reading.) "Antoine Garbois, Colonel of the Fifth Regiment of the Infantry of the Line." What! was he a Colonel?

Ant. On the same day that I was made one.

Pierre. (Reading.) "Five feet eight inches high."

Ant. Very nearly my height."

Pierre. (Reading.) "An open countenance——"

Ant. Like mine.

Pierre. (Reading.) "A sabre wound on his upper lip."

Ant. Just such another as this may be.

Pierre. (Lets fall the paper.) What—eh—no, it can't be! Is it—what my own son? My own son! Come to my arms, my dear boy!

Ant. Ah, my father!

(They embrace.)

Pierre. I can't recover myself. My Antoine a colonel—two epaulettes, and a sabre wound in his face! Oh, how delightful, to be sure! You want nothing now, my fine fellow.

Ant. Yes, I am indeed your son, and I bring you the best reward I have received for all my services. Read that.

Pierre. (Taking a paper, and reading the address.) What, is this for me? (Opens it and reads.) "Sir, to reward a brave action is no more than justice. In answer to your memorial of the 22nd of March, 1757"—My memorial of March, 1757! Why, I was not born then, and so I had not learned to write at that date. There must be some mistake.

Ant. And yet it is addressed to Mr. Garbois, at St. Mareel.

Pierre. Why then it must be Jerome Garbois, my father.

Ant. What, is he still alive?

Pierre. Aye, that he is and hearty, I promise you. What ho, Father Jerome! Father Jerome, here! (Enter JEROME, R. H.) Here's our pretty little fellow, Antoine, returned.

Jer. Is it possible—my grandson!

Pierre. Judge for yourself. There he stands.

Jer. (Embracing him.) Ah, my dear little Antoine—how big you are grown, to be sure!

Pierre. But what the devil's this you have been about, father—presenting a memorial. What right have you to memorialize?

Jer. Me, child! I never presented a memorial in my life.

Pierre. However, here's a letter addressed to you, in answer to a memorial. It speaks of a brave action—and of a reward.

Jer. Well, I dare say I may have performed a brave action before now.

Pierre. Aye, aye, father. I warrant me a man may have a brave heart in his bosom, though it does not beat under a soldier's jacket.

Jer. (Takes the paper and reads.) "A brave action!"

Pierre. Look further on, father.

Jer. (Reading.) "In answer to your Memorial of the 22nd. of March, in which is detailed the battle where you earried a redoubt"—Well, curse me if I know what this means. I may have earried off some young girls in my time, but I never had anything to do with redoubts. Ah, I see what it is now,—it must be for my father.

Ant. The brave Philip! Ah, had he but lived to see it.

Pierre. Had he but lived? Why, what do you mean! He's the heartiest of the whole family.

Ant. What, my great grandfather?

Pierre. Who was a hundred and two a few weeks ago.

Phil. (Within, R.) What ho! Jerome! Pierre! Boys—boys, where are you?

Pierre. There—do you hear him? I will go and tell him of your arrival.

Ant. No, no, father—no. Rather go and assemble the whole village to witness what is about to take place.

Jer. He is here.

Ant. Pray leave me alone with him. Go you, and assemble the villagers.

[Pierre and Jerome go out, U. E. R.]

Phil. (Coming from the inn, R. and observing the others going.) Hollo, Pierre! Jerome! Where the devil are you going, boys?

Ant. Permit me, sir, to offer you my arm.

Phil. Sir, you are very polite.

Ant. You seem fatigued, sir.

Phil. Yes, sir. And I know few men who have a greater right to be fatigued, considering that I have been marching upwards of a hundred years.

Ant. Ah, Mr. Philip Garbois, the country that boasts such soldiers as you—

Phil. What, sir—you know my name!

Ant. To be sure I do. Your name, I am happy to say, is well known.

Phil. I certainly have borne it long enough, and you may have met with it somewhere or other. A lover always writes his name with that of his mistress. Glory has been my mistress, and there has not been a battle these eighty years in which I have not made my mark.

Ant. Your merit is acknowledged, sir, and, ere long, will be rewarded.

Phil. They must make haste about it, then, or else they will delay it so long that I can wait no longer. But I guess by your language that you are—

Ant. A soldier like yourself, sir, consequently your brother in arms.

Phil. Aye, aye, my younger brother. We did not enter at the same time, I'm thinking. But may I be favoured with your name?

Ant. You will learn it very shortly. But I must obey punctually the orders I have received. I quit you now, but shall shortly return. I beg of you to remain on this spot.

[Exit U. E. L. H.]

Phil. What can this mean? Ah! I have it now. He has heard that there was a man of upwards of a hundred in the village, and curiosity induced him to stop and see me—whether I could walk, or read without spectacles, or hear without a trumpet. Aye, when one has reached that age, one seems scarcely to belong to this world. To be sure, one is pretty near the other. But a man must live his time out. It would never do to kill himself because he was old. But I'm not done for yet. I'm sound wind and limb, and strong at heart. But where is Jerome? where is Pierre? I'm always afraid that that wild young dog will be getting into mischief.

Enter FRANÇOIS, U. E. L. H. wearing a military hat and feather, and a sabre in a cavalry belt.

Well, friend François—how gay you are. I sup-

pose it's on account of the festival that you have put on that fine hat and feather.

Fran. Yes—the hat and feather are for the festival—this—(Pointing to his sabre.)—is for something else, and the rest of the tackle is because a colonel has arrived in the village who has ordered all the National Guard to appear in uniform, so here I am.

Phil. A colonel!

Fran. Yes. I suppose he's going to have a grand review. We shall muster at least fifteen men.

Phil. Then I am sure I ought to be amongst them—though curse me if I know what it means.

Fran. Nor I either, Father Philip, because the colonel has not told me—but this I know, that notwithstanding the respect that I bear you, Father Philip, I shall measure swords with your booby of a grandson, if he attempts to pluck the damask rose that I have been cultivating these five years.

Phil. Oh, my boy! if you cannot settle this matter with the tongue, do not call in the aid of the sword. Never draw that weapon but in defence of your country. Be calm, my child—be calm!

(Patting him on the head.)

Fran. I am calm as a day in June, but I have been a soldier, and we shall see.

Phil. We shall see! Why, have you the impudence to attempt to kill my poor little grandson?

Fran. I don't exactly say that I mean precisely to kill him—I only mean to try.

Phil. You kill my grandson! You, a raw recruit, just out of the awkward squad! A fellow that scarcely knows the meaning of eyes right! Draw, sir! Out with your sabre! Stand on your defence! Damme, I'll have a touch at you myself!

(After repeated efforts he succeeds in drawing his sword.)

ISABEL enters, R. H.

Isa. Ah! Here's Mr. Garbois going to kill François! Help—fire—murder! (Drum heard.)

Phil. Eh! What does that mean?

Mad. Lerond. (Who has entered, R.) It's a colonel, who is coming to hold a review!

Phil. A lucky interruption for you, villain! You would have breathed your last by this time!

Fran. The colonel coming, and I not at the head of my column!

JEROME runs in, followed by PIERRE.

Jer. Ah, father! Here is our own dear child—our Antoine!

Phil. Antoine!

(Loud shout. ANTOINE enters, L. H., in full uniform as Colonel, followed by all the villagers—the men wearing military accoutrements, the women bearing nosegays.)

Ant. Father! Dear great-grandfather! I have been commanded to seek you out.

Phil. To seek me? Huzza! Does my country again require my services?

Ant. Nay, sir, your country needs you not to fight her battles now—already you've fulfilled that task nobly—and to prove to all her children that she knows how to acknowledge their services, and sooner or later to recompense their merit.—(Presents him with letter.) Read this.

Phil. Read—reward—eh—what! (Opens it.) Bless my soul! My poor eyes were never dim till this day! (Reads.) “To reward a brave action is but justice. In answer to your memorial of the 22nd of March, 1757, in which you mention a battle wherein you carried a redoubt, his Majesty, anxious to repair the former omission, sends you the Cross.”

Pierre and Jer. (Looking over him.) “The Cross of the Legion of Honour!”

Phil. The Cross of the Legion of Honour! Quick—quick, friends, and place it on my breast, that has so long panted for it, ere it ceases to throb for ever! (He sinks on a chair—Antoine fastens the cross on his breast.) Well, my children—you see it is come at last. Better late than never!

Pierre. Having had a little conversation with Miss Isabel, I renounce her hand in favour of François.

Isa. I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Pierre.

Fran. And so am I—and I now think you a very sensible man, Pierre, and we're all friends again, I hope.

Phil. You have acted rightly, Pierre—but I know your intention in marrying my pretty Isabel was to continue our lusty generation. But that office must now devolve upon your son Antoine, who I am certain is much better calculated for the performance of such an important duty. What do you say, great grandson—will you promise to do your best?

Ant. I will not only promise to do my best, sir, but will present you with a specimen of what has already been done. (He retires up the stage.)

Pierre. What does the child mean?

Jer. Be quiet, boy.

(Antoine returns, leading in LOUISE and THEODORE, L. H.)

Ant. Allow me to introduce my wife and son—*Pierre and Phil.* What?

Phil. Your wife, Antoine! Allow me, madam, to salute you. (Embraces her.) Upon my word, grandson, I congratulate you on your taste.

Pierre. Allow your father also to salute you.

Jer. Be quiet, you harum scarum boy! Wait for another opportunity.

Phil. And this is my great grandson? Come hither, you little curly-headed rascal—you little A of my family alphabet—kiss your old crooked Z!

(He attempts to take Theodore up in his arms, to kiss him, but fails.)

Jer. Let me hold him up to you, father.

(Jerome holds Theodore up to Philip, who warmly embraces him.)

Fran. Isabel, that's a very pretty pattern for our family manufactory.

Isa. Fie, François—you make me blush!

Phil. As to you, François, the colonel will see to your papers, take my word for it. Children, this is the happiest moment of my long life. The sight of such a stout family ladder makes my old heart dance for joy! And all I now hope is, that the lovers of twenty-one may marry and be happy parents before they are twenty-nine—be honoured grandfathers and mothers before they are fifty—happy great grandfathers and mothers before they are eighty—and as happy great great grandfathers and mothers as I am at One Hundred and Two!

CURTAIN.

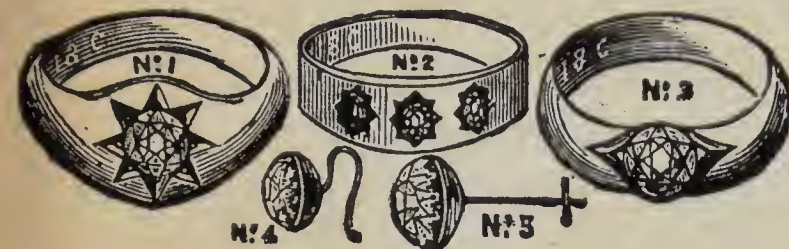
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